

Undergraduate Catalog of Courses

Volume 2015 2015-2016

Article 42

7-2015

Women's and Gender Studies

Saint Mary's College of California

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Recommended Citation

Saint Mary's College of California (2015) "Women's and Gender Studies," *Undergraduate Catalog of Courses*: Vol. 2015 , Article 42.
Available at: <http://digitalcommons.stmarys-ca.edu/undergraduate-catalog/vol2015/iss1/42>

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WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES

Women's and Gender Studies asks fundamental questions about human existence: is a man born or made? What is a woman? Are those the only identities available to humans throughout history? What is femininity? What is masculinity? How are ideas and feelings about sex and gender shaped? What structures and social forces are involved in shaping them? An interdisciplinary program that invites students to take classes in anthropology, sociology, history, literature, politics and others, Women's and Gender Studies challenges students to question what is "natural" about gender identities and roles in society; to examine the origins of such views and how they have changed over time; and to analyze how race and class intersect with sexualities and gender to construct modern society and popular culture. The program focuses on uncovering the contributions women have made to society through history and how they have envisioned social justice and the common good. True to its roots in social movements that fought for equality, Women's and Gender Studies seeks to understand how systems of oppression function and how different groups respond to and resist injustice at home and abroad. To that end, the program teaches students to think deeply, to read critically, to write clearly, and to speak convincingly. Furthermore, Women's and Gender Studies prepares students to be agents of change who take community responsibility and social justice seriously, offering them multiple opportunities to engage in service learning and similar projects. Thus the program fulfills its mission of educating the whole person for the complexities of a globalizing world.

Women's and Gender Studies courses are interdisciplinary in nature, cross-listed with a range of departments including but not limited to anthropology, biology, communication, English, ethnic studies, history, performing arts, politics, psychology, sociology, Spanish, theology and religious studies.

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Curriculum Women's and Gender Studies

LEARNING OUTCOMES

When students have completed a minor or major in the Women's and Gender Studies Program, they will be able to:

- **IDENTIFY** and understand assumptions and arguments about gender, race, class, and sexuality in scholarly, popular, public, and interpersonal discourses.
- **EVALUATE** diverse theories of feminism and debates about gender.
- **DIFFERENTIATE** among complex and diverse points of view regarding gender, race, class, and sexuality in a variety of academic fields.
- **WRITE** clear and well-reasoned prose employing appropriate methods of research in the field.
- **ENGAGE** in Social Justice Praxis, including intellectual or social advocacy locally or globally.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

The major requires 12 courses. Four are core courses in Women's and Gender Studies: one lower-division (**WGS 1**) and three upper-division (**WGS 100**, **WGS 177**, and **WGS 190**). Eight are upper-division electives cross-listed with Women's and Gender Studies. WGS majors and minors satisfy degree requirements through an interdisciplinary combination of WGS core courses and courses on gender in a variety of departments and programs. Majors have two options: a) a concentration in either social sciences or humanities, with the majority of courses in one of those disciplines; or b) a balanced distribution of courses, four and four, in social sciences and humanities. Students must take at least two courses each from social sciences and humanities. At least one course must focus on gender issues from transnational perspectives or ethnically and racially diverse U.S. communities. One one cross-listed January Term course may be petitioned for credit. Women's and Gender Studies students may also design a double or split major with another discipline, with the approval of the director of Women's and Gender Studies and the chair of the other department.

MINOR REQUIREMENTS

The minor requires six classes: three core courses (**WGS 1**, **100**, **177**), and three upper-division electives cross-listed with Women's and Gender Studies. No more than two courses may be in a single discipline; one must focus on non-Western, Third World, or minority U.S. women.

SPLIT MAJORS

Split majors combine work in Women's and Gender Studies and another academic department or program. A split major must be approved by the chairs or directors of both departments. This major ordinarily comprises nine upper-division courses (six in one field and three in another), in addition to the lower-division prerequisites in WGS (ie., **WGS 1**) and the other department. All split majors in WaGS must complete the four core courses (**WGS 1**, **WGS 100**, **WGS 177**, **WGS 190**).

PREREQUISITE GRADE

Any course listed in this program with a prerequisite assumes a grade of C– or better in the prerequisite course.

C O U R S E S

CORE COURSES

1 Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies

An introduction to the interdisciplinary field of Women's and Gender Studies. The course provides a broad perspective on research in gender in a variety of disciplines (including sociology, psychology, politics, philosophy, history, and literature). Topics include the historically changing representations of women; the history of the women's movement in the United States; globalization; contemporary feminisms, sexualities, ecology, and the intersection of gender, race, and class. A goal of the course is for each student to develop a critical perspective on the meaning of gender in our society. *This course satisfies the Social, Historical, and Cultural Understanding requirement and the Common Good requirement of the Core Curriculum.*

100 Research Seminar in Women's and Gender Studies

An exploration of a theme or problem area in the field of Women's and Gender Studies. Past topics have included: women and work; gender and science; women and religion; gender and popular culture; transnational perspectives on gender; U.S. cultural representations of gender; women and the media; masculinities; the history of sexuality. The course combines seminar discussions of texts that represent a variety of methodologies and disciplines with research papers. Research topics are designed by individual students in consultation with the instructor. *Prerequisite: WGS 1 or permission of instructor.*

126 Engaging Communities

This course will examine issues in gender and social justice through community engagement. Students will be asked to address a "real world" understanding of topics ranging from violence to electoral politics, poverty to environmental sustainability, and many others, through service-learning in behalf of community partners whose work addresses a range of related social issues. This course will satisfy requirements for the major and minor in Women's and Gender Studies and is open to all students. Experience in **WGS 001: Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies** is encouraged but not required. *Prerequisites: English 4 or WGS 001.*

177 Feminist and Gender Theories

This seminar provides a series of inquiries into the diverse theoretical frameworks of contemporary feminism. Critical race theory, cultural studies, post-structuralism, Marxist and postcolonial theories, gender difference and queer theories, sexualities studies, ecofeminism, and contemporary identity politics are a few of the directions in discussion and research. *Prerequisite: WGS 1 or permission of instructor.*

190 Senior Seminar

Critical examination of theories and issues in contemporary Women's and Gender Studies methodologies. Directed readings, research, and writing of a final senior paper or project under the supervision and approval of instructor.

Prerequisites: Upper-division standing; WGS 1; WGS 100 and 177. Open to minors upon approval of director and instructor of the course. (In the case of a split or double major, Women's and Gender Studies 190 may be taken in conjunction with thesis work in the other discipline. In the case of a minor, WGS 190 may be taken in conjunction with thesis work in the major.) This course satisfies the Writing in the Disciplines requirement of the Core Curriculum.

REGULARLY OFFERED CROSS-LISTED ELECTIVES

88 Biology of Women

Biology of women is an introduction to the structure, physiology, and genetics of women across the lifespan. We study physiology and development from conception, through puberty, pregnancy and aging. The first half of the course explores the genetic, hormonal, and developmental basis for one's gender. The latter part of the course deals with specific health concerns of women and focus on the high frequency or uniquely gender-related illnesses and their physiologic basis. *(Cross-listed as Biology 88)*

106 Gender Politics

A study of the social, economic, political, and legal status of women in contemporary America. The course is an introductory survey of the dynamic changes taking place in the relationship between women and men. Topics include the history of women's liberation movements, the Equal Rights Amendment, abortion, sexism in the workplace, feminist social theory, and women in politics. *(Cross-listed as Politics 106)*

106 Women in Sports

This course analyzes the relationship between gender and sport from multiple perspectives. Emphasis will be placed on exploring the changing roles in sports for women, as well as how past and current beliefs regarding gender equity, health and women's role in society shape the experience of women in sports in our society today. *(Cross-listed as Kinesiology 106)*

111 Kinship, Marriage and Family

For more than a century anthropological research has focused on households, kinship relations, childhood and families across cultures and through time. The anthropological record shows us that concepts such as "marriage," "childhood," and "family have been understood in radically different ways, and this course provides students with an historical and theoretical perspective on the anthropological study of kinship as it relates to different issues connected to the state of marriage, family, and childhood throughout the world. *(Cross-listed as Sociology 111)*

115 Theories of Justice

The course examines different definitions and views of justice: justice and race; justice and gender; justice and welfare; international justice; justice and the law; environmental law; court cases and current debates on euthanasia, abortion, and pornography. *(Cross-listed as Politics 115)*

116 New Immigrants and Refugees

Looks at the attitudinal and legal reactions to immigrants and refugees in the United States. Emphasis is placed on the new Americans, why they come, and how they differ from earlier migrants. Special attention is given to the impact of new immigrant groups in California. *(Cross-listed as Sociology 116)*

120 Transgression and Defiance in the Texts of Contemporary Latin American Women Writers (in Spanish)

Women's writing in Latin America has transformed traditional images of women, their societies, and the cultural and political context that they narrate. This course is a survey of Latin American women writers breaking out of the literary tradition. *(Cross-listed as Modern Languages 120)*

121 Dance History 1

This course covers the development of dance from its roots in court dancing through the development of ballet to the beginning of the modern era. Students attend professional dance concerts in the Bay Area. *(Cross-listed as Performing Arts 121)*

123 Sex and the Spirit

An exploration of a contested area in Christian thought today, setting traditional understandings in dialogue with contemporary concerns and critiques. How does our experience of ourselves as sexual beings open us to the experience of the holy, and conversely, how might our desire for God be intimately related to our sexual desire and longings? *(Cross-listed as Theology and Religious Studies 123)*

125 Gender and Culture

While sex is biological, gender refers to the set of cultural expectations assigned to males and females. This course takes a four-field anthropological approach to understanding gender, investigating such topics as third and fourth gender diversity, gender among non-human primates, gender roles in prehistory and the sociolinguistics of gender usage. Special attention is paid to the ways in which gender articulates with other social practices and institutions such as class, kinship, religions and subsistence practices. *(Cross-listed as Anthropology 125)*

Curriculum Women's and Gender Studies

125 Gender and Society

While sex differences are biological, gender encompasses the traits that society assigns to and inculcates in males and females. This course studies the latter: the interplay between gender and society. It takes an inclusive perspective, with a focus on men and women in different cultural contexts defined by ethnic group membership, sexuality, and socioeconomic status. *(Cross-listed as Sociology 125)*

125 Women in the Christian Tradition

An introduction to the major themes and tensions that shape the study of women in the Christian tradition. *(Cross-listed as Theology and Religious Studies 125)*

139 History of Women in America

A survey of American women's history from 17th century colonial encounters to the present with an emphasis on ethnic and class diversity, shifting definitions and cultural representations of womanhood, and the efforts of women to define their own roles and extend their spheres of influence. *(Cross-listed as History 139)*

147 Psychology of Gender

A critical review of the theory and research on gender from the biological, psychological, and sociological perspectives. The course explores the social construction of gender and how it impacts human development and social behavior. Throughout the course, the interaction between gender and the complexities of race, culture, and sexual orientation is considered. *Prerequisites: Psych 1 and 2. (Cross-listed as Psychology 147)*

151 Women in Latin American History

An examination of the participation of women in struggles for social justice in Latin America, analyzing what has motivated women to abandon traditional roles and how they have shaped debates about human rights, democracy, feminism, ecology, and socialism in selected Latin American countries. *(Cross-listed as History 151)*

153 U.S. Latino/a Literature (in English)

An introduction to the literature and cultures of Latinos/as in the United States, with prose and poetry from Chicanos/as, Cuban Americans, Dominican Americans, and Puerto Ricans, exploring memory, exile, language, family, and displacement. *(Cross-listed as English 153)*

173 Women Writers

Intensive study of some aspect of literature by women. Examples of possible topics are: 19th-century British novelists, contemporary women poets, American and Canadian short story writers. May be repeated for credit as content varies. *(Cross-listed as English 173)*

In addition new courses are approved on a term-to-term basis. Examples of such electives include English 154 (African-American Women Writers) or 141 (Medieval Women Writers), Art History 194 (History of Women Artists).